

5 Goals for Live Away Dads

A peaceful divorce? Possibly. A pain-free divorce? That's exceedingly rare. The adjustments for dad, mom and kids are major.

William Klatte has written an insightful book called **Live-Away Dads**. In it, he suggests five beneficial actions you can take: goals you can focus on when you don't know what to do next.

First, keep your promises. Your kids are depending on you, and kept promises are an important way you can create stability during a time of uncertainty. Each broken promise, no matter how small, reduces their trust in you a little bit, and can really erode over time. So, think before you speak, and do everything you can to keep your word.

Second, show your kids that you'll be okay. For them to feel confident and at peace, they have to see that you are. If it's obvious that you're devastated, they'll be insecure. That doesn't mean you never show weaknesses; honesty is critical. But show them in words and actions that you can make it through the tough times.

Third, support their mother. Impossible, you say? It's a vital element of any healthy family—intact or otherwise. Recognize that cutting her down lowers you in the long run. Help them honor her as their mother. Work out disagreements in private.

Fourth, be the best parent you can be. That's all you can control anyway. They need patience and understanding, fair limits, balance and consistency from you, so don't try to counteract their mom's parenting style. It brings more harm than good.

Finally, be involved for the long haul. It sounds obvious, but it's amazing how many divorced dads get sidetracked by a new job, a different city, or a new relationship—maybe with a new family—and lose track of the sincere commitments they made to their children. Being a positive influence in your kids' lives means being there when they need you, for small and big things.

Don't let your motivation as a dad fall off through the years because of frustration or the tedium of routine. You are important to your kids even if they don't always show it.

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